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ABSTRACT

This is one of a series of "Awareness Units" aimed at developing self concept and self esteem in junior high school students. In the student introduction sheet to the unit, various aspects of self awareness are mentioned. Students are encouraged to examine their feelings and behavior. Accompanying guides for teachers of the unit are also included. For each circle discussion or project activity outlined, objectives and teaching methods of the topic to be presented are suggested. For classroom and individual projects, necessary materials and class time are also noted. Individual discussion and activity topics include: "Someone I Know Who Is an Accepting Person," "I Was Surprised by the Way Someone Acted," "Someone Handled a Problem Differently Than I Would Have," "I've Got a Friend Who Is Really Different From Me," "A Time I Was Rejected for Something About Me That Was Different," "What Is Prejudice, Discrimination, and Stereotyping," "Acceptance and Rejection in Music," and "Me and My T-Shirt." (GC)

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"Someone I Know Who Is an Accepting Person"

I Gotta Be Me...,You Gotta Be You
An Innerchange Circle Session **IIa**

Objectives:

to give the students an opportunity to—
—focus on the positive qualities of people they know whose behavior is nonjudgmental and nonevaluative
—explore the good feelings these people inspire in them

Stating the topic:

"Our topic for today is *'Someone I Know Who Is an Accepting Person.'* One of the interesting things about a person like this is that we usually find we feel very good around him or her. Do you know why? This person lets you be *you* and accepts all the things you are, both the good things and the bad things. He or she doesn't judge you, doesn't stereotype you, and doesn't label you.

"This person might be a parent, a friend, a teacher, a brother or sister, your doctor—it could be anyone you know. So take a minute to think about it. The topic is *'Someone I Know Who Is an Accepting Person.'* "

Optional discussion question:

1. "What kinds of feelings do you generally have when you're around this person?"

Cognitive summary (final 2-8 minutes):

1. "What were some things you noticed or learned in this session that you would like to mention?"
2. "What seem to be the main ways people can show acceptance?"
3. "How do people seem to act when they are around people who are nonjudgmental?"

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"I Was Surprised by the Way Someone Acted"

Objective:

to give students an opportunity to understand that the elements of unpredictability and surprise are essential aspects of being an individual

Stating the topic:

"Our circle session topic is *'I Was Surprised by the Way Someone Acted.'* Have you ever had a friend with whom you were very close, and you felt you really knew this person, and then all of a sudden this person did something that you would never have expected? It's this very unpredictability that keeps us from being bored with each other.

"Even when we think we understand and know people very well, it seems as if they will do things that let us know even more about them. So, how can we know someone if we don't go below the surface where there are all kinds of surprises. These can be both positive and negative. Can you think of a time when something like this happened to you? (If someone did something that affected you negatively, please don't say who it was.) Our topic is *'I Was Surprised by the Way Someone Acted.'*"

Optional discussion question:

1. "What was your first reaction when this person acted this way?"

Cognitive summary (final 2-8 minutes):

1. "What is it about being surprised by someone's actions that disturbs us or delights us?"
2. "Can you think of a time when your behavior surprised someone else?"
3. "What did you notice or learn in this session that you would like to mention?"

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"Someone Handled a Problem Differently Than I Would Have"

I Gotta Be Me...,You Gotta Be You
An Innerchange Circle Session **11c**

Objectives:
to give the students an opportunity to—
—recognize that individuals handle and manage areas of their lives in different ways
—realize that different approaches to handling problems are effective for different individuals

Stating the topic:
"Today we're going to discuss the topic, *'Someone Handled a Problem Differently Than I Would Have.'* The famous Italian film director, Federico Fellini, once said: *'Accept me as I am; only then will we discover each other.'* It's this kind of discovery about the people we know that makes them interesting to us—the way they think and the ways they react to certain situations. And often it's observation of other people in life situations that gives us ways to grow ourselves.

"One of these kinds of observations is to look at how people handle problems. There may be a problem, for example, of how to fix something, and someone knows a way that's different from how you might have fixed it. Or perhaps there's some emotional problem they handle in a way that's new or different to your way of thinking. See if you can think of a time when *'Someone Handled a Problem Differently Than I Would Have.'* "

Optional discussion question:
1. "What reactions did you have to this different way of handling a problem?"

Cognitive summary (final 2-8 minutes):
1. "What were some things you noticed that some or all of us had in common as we talked about this topic?"
2. "What did you notice or learn in this circle session that you'd like to mention?"

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"I've Got a Friend Who is Really Different from Me"

I Gotta Be Me...,You Gotta Be You
An Innerchange Circle Session **11d**

Objectives:

to give the students an opportunity to—

—focus on the natural and normal differences between themselves and others

—see that these differences can be as positive to developing a friendship as similarities can be

Stating the topic:

"Our topic for this circle session is *'I've Got a Friend Who Is Really Different from Me.'* The famous rock singer Janis Joplin once said: *'You better not compromise yourself—it's all you got.'* Being yourself is an important theme that crops up in life over and over again. Compromising yourself means selling out your real self to some extent just to please someone else. Being yourself means that you will always be different from other people in certain ways. And it also means that they will be different from you when they are being themselves.

"These differences in a friend can please us, surprise us, delight us, shock us, or displease us, but the differences are what make a friend a unique person. The differences can be external (that means they are things that show on the outside) like skin color, size, or physical appearance. Or the differences can be internal (inside things) like this person's viewpoints, ways of reacting to certain situations, or how he or she feels at certain times. Do you have a friend who comes to mind? Our topic today is *'I've Got a Friend Who Is Really Different from Me.'*"

Optional discussion question:

1. "How do you usually react to this characteristic in your friend?"

Cognitive summary (final 2-8 minutes):

1. "Is it possible to have a friend who is *just like you?*"
2. "Why do you think people sometimes sell out their real selves when their differences bother their friends?"
3. "How can you let someone know that you appreciate the different and special things about him or her?"

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"A Time I Was Rejected for Something About Me That Was Different"

Objectives:

to give students an opportunity to examine personal situations when something that is a part of them was arbitrarily chosen to be the object of rejection by others

Stating the topic:

"Our topic today is *'A Time I Was Rejected for Something About Me That Was Different.'* This 'something different' could be one of any number of things, but basically it's something that is a part of you that you want to keep. It could be your religion, your viewpoints on a subject, your racial or cultural background, your age, your sex, the way you've chosen to dress or wear your hair. It might be the way you react in certain situations, or even the way you dance.

"If you decide to share in this session, tell us about what happened, but please don't mention names. The topic again is *'A Time I Was Rejected for Something About Me That Was Different.'* "

Optional discussion questions:

1. "How did being rejected make you feel about that part of you that was different?"
2. "How do you feel about the incident now?"

Cognitive summary (final 2-8 minutes):

1. "Have we been discussing prejudice during this session?"
2. "What kinds of things do people do to get over being rejected by someone else?"
3. "What did you learn as a result of this session?"
4. "How can an experience of rejection lead to positive results?"

Note:

Acceptance of student's verbal offerings are particularly essential in this session.

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"What Is Prejudice, Discrimination, and Stereotyping?"

I Gotta Be Me. . .,You Gotta Be You
An Innerchange Supporting Activity **11f**

Teacher Presentation and Class Discussion

This activity relates to *Social Studies, Health Education* and *English Language Arts.*

Description:
The students will listen and participate in defining the terms *prejudice, discrimination* and *stereotyping.* They will also discuss the effects of all three on the lives of people.

Objective:
to increase student awareness of the meanings of these terms so that they can benefit optimally from the rest of the activites in this unit

Time needed:
half a class period

Materials needed:
chalkboard and chalk (Students may benefit from taking notes.)

Procedure:
Begin by writing *prejudice, discrimination* and *stereotyping* on the board. Then tell the students you are going to read a definition* of each one, without telling them which definition fits which term. After each definition is read, discuss and redefine it with the class before going to the next. The definitions follow:

A standardized mental picture held in common by members of a group and representing an oversimplified opinion; attitude based on feelings, or a judgment made with little or no information (as of a person, a race, an issue or an event). — **Stereotyping**

A premade judgment not based on facts, an unfair opinion, or learning made without sufficient knowledge. An irrational attitude of hostility directed against an individual, a group, or race, or their supposed characteristics. — **Prejudice**

An instance of distinguishing or categorizing; to make a difference in treatment or favor on a basis other than individual merit. — **Discrimination**

*These definitions were taken from *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary,* with minor changes by the author aimed at simplification.

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"What Is Prejudice, Discrimination, and Stereotyping?"

continued

After you read each definition, ask the class which term they think it describes. The guessing aspect is not of great importance. Simply urge the students to think over each concept and to find out how the terms connect with the concepts.

For each term, in turn,ask the following discussion questions, encouraging as many students as possible who would like to comment to do so.

Stereotyping:

1. "Can you think of an example of stereotyping?"
2. "What makes stereotyping unreasonable?"
3. "How does it hurt people?"
4. "What can you do when someone stereotypes you?"

Prejudice:

1. "Can you think of an example of prejudice?"
2. "How is prejudice similar to stereotyping?"
3. "Where do the 'pre-judgements' come from?"
4. "What happens to a person on the inside when someone prejudges him or her in a negative way before getting to know him or her?"

Discrimination:

1. "Can you think of an example of discrimination?"
2. "How does it hurt people?"
3. "When people unfairly discriminate against others, how do you think they explain it or justify it to themselves?"

Conclusion:

Finally, after each of these terms and concepts have been explored, ask the class to come up with brief definitions, *in their own language,* of the three terms. Brainstorm these and write them on the chalkboard.

General discussion question:

1. "Does a well-known television character who constantly stereotypes just about everybody come to your mind? Who?"
2. "Why do you think some groups of people are discriminated against?"
3. "Do you think people, in general, know about all of their prejudices, or are they unaware of some, or all, of them?"
4. "Do you think anyone has ever lived who never stereotyped anyone else or had no prejudices at all?"
5. "If you want to get rid of your prejudices, how can you do it?"

Embellishment:

Ask the class to define and/or discuss the meanings of each of the following terms:

racism
sexism
integration
segregation
in-group
out-group
social groups
equal opportunity
equal rights
generalizations
assumptions
facts
rationalizations
bigot
religion
race
creed
ethnic group

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"What Is Prejudice, Discrimination, and Stereotyping?"

continued

Caution:

While specific instances of stereotyping, labeling, bigotry, and unfair discrimination will be mentioned, keep the focus on the irrational kinds of thinking that causes these practices. The major purpose of the activity should *not* be to create a long list of injustices.

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"Acceptance and Rejection in Music"

I Gotta Be Me. . .,You Gotta Be You
An Innerchange Supporting Activity **11g**

Class Project and Discussion

This activity relates to *Music, Social Studies, Health Education*, and *English Language Arts*

Description:

Depending on whether or not a good quality stereo set is available, the students will either listen to musical selections and discuss each one as a class, or will discuss the meaning of written lyrics in small groups. The records or written lyrics are contributed by the students. A follow-up discussion concludes the activity.

Objective:

to familiarize students better with the concepts of acceptance (of self and others) and rejection (of self and others) through the familiar mode of popular music

Time needed:

10-15 minutes for introduction to the activity; 2-5 days for individual student research; 1-2 class periods for listening to music and discussion (if stereo set is available); or one class period for small group interaction and class discussion (if stereo set is not available)

Materials needed:

a good-quality stereo set (if possible); records or written lyrics (to be contributed by students)

Procedure:

In your own words discuss with the students how many of their favorite records have lyrics that express many feelings and needs everyone feels at one time or another. Such themes as searching out one's own identity, self-acceptance, self-rejection, and acceptance and rejection of others are frequently repeated by many singers and musical groups. It is for these reasons, in addition to the quality of the music, that we like or dislike these records. So often we'll hear a song and be almost tempted to think the writer must have known our own personal feelings because the words so closely parallel our own thoughts and changes.

Ask the class to spend some time going through their own records to find selections that deal with their need to be themselves. They should also seek out selections that focus on their ease or difficulty in accepting this same need in others.

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"Acceptance and Rejection in Music"

continued

If there is a good-quality stereo set available to you that won't mar their records, ask the students to bring the records in. If there isn't, ask them to copy down the lyrics most meaningful to them and bring them to class.

If a stereo set is available, play the selections the students bring in and discuss each one after playing it. Focus on the lyricist's struggle with acceptance and/or rejection.

If a stereo set is not available and the students have brought in lyrics in writing, divide the class into minigroups. Ask the groups to read and discuss the lyrics with one another. You might wish to divide them into groups that deal with various topics, such as the search for identify, self-acceptance, self-rejection, acceptance of others, and rejection of others.

Some suggested singers and/or lyricists who produce music pertinent to this topic are:

Joni Mitchell
John David Souther
Gordon Lightfoot
Diana Ross
Paul Simon
Stevie Wonder
Carole King
Phoebe Snow
Leonard Cohen
John Denver
Carly Simon
Harry Chapin
Billie Holliday
Kris Kristofferson
Joan Baez
Roberta Flack
Neil Diamond
Bob Dylan
Ray Charles
Judy Collins
Stephen Stills
James Taylor
Dory Previn
Aretha Franklin

Conclusion:

Some suggested questions for a follow-up discussion are:

1. "Do some of the things you feel in music seem to be shared by others?"
2. "What are some of the ways these musicians and/or lyricists deal with these feelings in their songs?"
3. "Does it seem likely that many feelings are not limited just to age groups or gender?"

FOR YOUR NOTES:

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"Me and My T-Shirt"

I Gotta Be Me. . .,You Gotta Be You
An Innerchange Supporting Activity **11h**

Individual Art Project

This activity relates to *Art, Health Education, Home Economics,* and *Communication.*

Description:
The students bring in T-shirts and apply slogans or sayings that appeal to them. The sayings focus on acceptance of self and others. Follow-up involves dealing with the actual or expected reactions from others to the sayings on the T-shirts.

Objective:
to give the students the artistic freedom to capture thoughts of acceptance of others and/or self

Time needed:
10-15 minutes for introduction to the activity; 1-3 class periods for art work; half to one full class period for follow-up

Materials needed:
T-shirts (one for each student, provided by themselves,) crayolas, iron, ironing board, newsprint; acrylics designed for painting on fabric or airbrush and paints

Procedure:
Explain to the class that you'd like to involve them in an enjoyable art project that they'll have a practical use for afterward.

Ask each student to think of a saying, a slogan, a line from a song or a poem, a quotation, or something they have made up that expresses certain thoughts about acceptance of self and/or others. Then ask them to bring a T-shirt into class that they can paint or draw this saying on. Some examples of sayings might be:

"I'm free to be me . . . to be all I can be."

"Hello world. It's me."

"Accept me as I am—only then will we discover each other."

Federico Fellini

"You better not compromise yourself—you're all you got."

Janis Joplin

"Anyone who imagines that all fruits ripen at the same time as strawberries, know nothing about grapes."

"We're all in this together."

The method of application of the saying may be (1) air brush and paints; (2) use of

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"Me and My T-Shirt"

continued

acrylics created for painting on fabric or (3) a method involving the use of crayolas. If the crayola method is used, apply the color to the T-shirt and then iron it with one piece of newsprint between the shirt and the iron and another piece of newsprint between the shirt and the ironing board. (If available, use an old, practically worn out iron.)

Follow-up:

Variation 2: Involve the class in role-playing sessions in which they wear the T-shirts and several students come up to them and respond to their shirts in various ways. This may be repeated until all students who wish to, have had a chance to be the focus of attention.

Variation 3: Ask the students to wear the T-shirts around the class and school for one day. Then, during the next class session, ask them to share some of the comments other people directed toward them.

Variation 1: Before the T-shirts are actually worn, engage the class in dyads during which they may practice how to respond when people read the sayings on their T-shirts and make comments.

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Additional Topics:

"A Time When I Was Treated According to a Stereotype"
"I Treated Someone the Way I Treat Someone Else Whom S/he Reminds Me of"
"I Liked (or Didn't Like) Someone Because of What Someone Else Said"
"A Time I Didn't Criticize Someone When S/he Made a Mistake"
"A Time Someone Treated Me As Though I Had No Feelings"

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"I Gotta Be Me ..., You Gotta Be You"

Innerchange Experience Sheets 11

We've all done it. Maybe you or somebody you know combs his hair like Jack. Perhaps somebody smiles in a cutesy way like Priscilla, or uses Harold's pick-up line on girls. Maybe they try to impress the home room teacher like Marci does or talk with a southern accent like Brett. We see how something works with one person (or at least it seems like it works), and we decide to use it ourselves. We adopt it as part of ourselves and try to make it fit. Perhaps you've noticed other people doing this. Maybe you've even noticed yourself doing it.

Does it work?

Let's take a minute here and be really honest with ourselves. A lot of times we take a habit, a viewpoint, a way of talking, or ways to do things from someone. Then we quickly forget that it didn't start as our own. Sometimes it fits in really well with who we are. But sometimes it's like a glove that's way too small or too big.

In the spaces on the next page see what things you can remember that are (or were) part of you that started with someone else or somewhere else. Then try to think about whether this thing fits into the way you really are:

These *Innerchange Experience Sheets* coordinate with Unit 11, *I Gotta Be Me ..., You Gotta Be You.*

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What I Borrowed from Outside Me	Does It Tune Into the Real Me?	
	Yes	No

(If you need more space, use the back of this paper or another sheet.)

Have you ever noticed how ...

some people just happen, others grow and happen, and some never happen? *Why*? Is it luck? Background? Educational opportunities? Sex? Intelligence? Freedom?

Some people appear to be pushed by the game of life, and others appear to be the players.

"I am exactly what I am, and not the way you'd like to see me be. I look outside long as I can, then close my eyes and watch my world unfold before me."

–"You Tell Me That I'm Falling Down"
–Carol Holland and Anna McGarrigle
– © 1975 Garden Court Music Co. (ASCAP)

What causes these differences?

Self-determination for one thing, deciding, without doubting, or "ifs," "ands," or "buts," that you *are*; deciding that you *are* a unique, one-of-a-kind person; deciding that you have your own style and selfhood; deciding you are much more than a collection of other people's opinions, styles, and manners.

Be able to occupy your own space

This doesn't mean having your own bedroom, but rather the space that is in and around you. Have you ever been around someone who feels as if s/he's crowding you, even when s/he's across the room? That person probably has a hard time having his or her own space and wants to move in on yours. On the other hand, have you ever been around someone whom you could spend long

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hours with in total comfort, because they were totally in their own space and didn't need any of yours?

Know your own mind

How many times have you said, "Well, I really *should* go to the party because ...." (And you had all sorts of reasons to do it, even if you really didn't want to.)

Maybe you could have said, "I don't *want* to go to that party. What I *really* want to do is ...."

Wants and *shoulds* come from two different places. Our *shoulds* come from the outside; they are usually what other people tell us. And our *wants* come much more from our inner selves, our own beliefs. They come from the real me.

"You better not compromise yourself— you're all you got."

—Janis Joplin

Where is the real me?

Over a period of a few days listen to what you say to other people. Don't spend a lot of time doing it, but pay a little more attention to the words you speak to others than you usually do. Then see if you can pinpoint the reasons you said certain things.

For example, suppose you say, "I never *have* liked that girl." Think about why you said it. It might be because you feel she doesn't like *you*. Perhaps you said something unkind about her awhile back, and now you're feeling a bit guilty. Or maybe you want to like her now because you feel you *should* be nice to her.

Now here comes the interesting part. In the chart below, write down some of the things you said and your reason(s) for saying them. Next figure out whether each reason is real belief or feeling (want) or a social obligation or good manners (should), and then check the appropriate column.

What I Said (out loud or to myself)	Why I Said It			
	Want	Should	?	Other Reasons

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"Becoming is superior to being."

—*Paul Klee*

You are growing, changing, learning, establishing who and why you *are*. You are becoming aware of being aware. All of these things are parts of *being*, being *you*. And the more you look for you, the more likely you'll experience the joy that comes from knowing yourself.

Just remember one thing ...

Everybody else out there is trying just as hard as you are to find out who they are. We are all in this search together. The more aware you are of your own search, the more patient and respectful you'll be of the ways others are seeking.

You may think your way is better or easier or whatever. It's okay. Let them be themselves while you are being yourself.

I do my thing,
and you do your thing.
I am not in this world
to live up to your expectations,
and you are not in this world
to live up to mine.
You are you and I am I .... "

—*Fritz Perls*

Here are some things to try:

Tune in carefully to your thoughts about other people. Notice whether you are being fair or whether you are stereotyping or pre-judging them. Also, notice how you treat others. Are you fair or do you treat them according to false ideas that you have about them?

Write a story. Find a rainy (sunny?) afternoon and write a story or a poem that answers the question, "*If I were to be reborn now. What would I like to be different, and what would I like to be the same?*" If you feel like it, share what you have written with someone who knows you well.

Take a look around you. Without being a judge, simply observe the people around you. See which ones you think are being themselves most of the time, and who is trying to be someone else.

Keep a journal. Pick a regular time, like once a week or once a day, and find something about you that is unique, that you like and feel good about. Then write these things in the journal. Take full credit for each compliment you give yourself.

These *Innerchange Experience Sheets* are your own. Now that you are finished with them, you may keep them in a private place or share them with someone. It's up to you.

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